ECLIPSE COMICS

THE TWISTED TALES OF BRUCE JONES

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FLOOD CONTROL COMICS

Part 4 of 4

The Illustrated Horror Magazine for Mature Readers

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No.4

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HUNG UP
YOU STAND IN THE LIVING ROOM OF THE MODEST WEST SIDE APARTMENT AND STARE DOWN IN SILENCE AT THE CARNAGE BEFORE YOU. THE SUMMER AIR DRIFTS SERENELY THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW BRINGING CITY NOISE AND SMELLS AND RIFFLING THE DRESS OF THE GIRL LYING SPRAWLED ON THE FLOOR AT YOUR FEET. YOUR EYES TRAVEL UP THE DRESS, ACROSS THE SMALL BACK AND DELICATE SHOULDERS, TO THE RUPTURED REMAINS OF THE FACE. THEY MOVE ACROSS THE BLOOD STAINED CARPET TO THE CRUMPLED FORM OF THE MAN, HIS BODY TWISTED LIKE SOME GROTESQUE PUPPET BESIDE THE GIRL. YOU DROP THE HEAVY WRENCH TO THE FLOOR AND SMILE QUIETLY AT YOUR WORK. YOUR NAME IS JEFF RICHARDS, YOU ARE A MURDERER ...
IT'S ALL WORKING OUT JUST THE WAY YOU PLANNED IT FROM THE BEGINNING ... EVERYTHING FALLING INTO PLACE LIKE CLOCK WORK. IN A FEW MINUTES THE WORST PART WILL BE OVER, THE STAGE WILL BE SET FOR THE FINAL SCENE. YOU MOVE TO THE CLOSET AND WITHDRAW THE CANS OF KEROSENE ...
YOU UNCAP THE FIRST CAN AND BEGIN SPREADING ITS CONTENTS OVER THE LIVING ROOM CARPET, ACROSS THE WALLS AND FURNITURE, TAKING CARE NOT TO SPILL ANY NEAR THE TWO SILENT FORMS ...

Story and Art:
BRUCE JONES

Colors:
Tom Luth

YOU EMPTY THE FIRST CAN AND THEN THE SECOND, YOUR NOSE WRINKLING AT THE PUNGENT SMELL OF KEROSENE. THEN YOU PULL THE PACK FROM YOUR POCKET, STICK A BUTT IN YOUR MOUTH, AND LIGHT IT. "MARY WAS A CHRONIC SMOKER, OFFICER... THAT'S PROBABLY WHAT STARTED THE FIRE..."
YOU SMOKE IT HALF DOWN, GAZING AROUND YOUR APARTMENT FOR THE LAST TIME, THEN YOU FLIP THE BUTT INTO THE CARPET AND WATCH IT LEAP INTO FLAME. IN SECONDS THE ROOM IS A PARTIAL HOLOCAUST, FLAMES CLIMBING GREEDILY OVER EVERY THING YOU OWN, THE CURTAINS, THE SOFA, THE T.V. AND NEW STEREO. YOU WATCH GRIMLY FOR A MOMENT THEN MOVE QUICKLY TO THE DEAD COUPLE...
TIME IS PRECIOUS. NOW AND THIS FINAL ACT IS CRUCIAL. WITH A GROAN YOU DRAG THE BODIES TO THE WALL AND PROP THEM UNDER THE OPEN WINDOW, ALREADY FEELING THE GLOW OF THE INTENSE HEAT...
FOR THE LAST TIME YOU LOOK AT MARY'S BATTERED FEATURES. THEN YOU DUMP HER ACROSS THE CORPSE OF HER LOVER AND HOIST THEM TO THE SILL. YOU CURSE AT THE STRAIN IN YOUR ARMS, THE ACHE IN YOUR BACK, BUT IT HAS TO BE THIS WAY, BOTH AT ONCE, SO IT WILL APPEAR THEY JUMPED TOGETHER... AT LAST, HEAVING, YOU PUSH THEM OVER AND OUT, TAKING CARE NOT TO BE SEEN YOURSELF...

THE ROOM IS AN INFERNO NOW, AND YOU HURRY QUICKLY TO THE DOOR AND OPEN IT CAUTIOUSLY. THE HALLWAY IS EMPTY AS YOU KNEW IT WOULD BE THIS TIME OF DAY. YOU CLOSE THE DOOR, TEST TO MAKE SURE IT'S LOCKED, THEN CROSS THE HALL AND OPEN THE ELEVATOR DOOR ...
ONCE INSIDE YOU KICK ASIDE THE SMALL WOODEN WEDGE THAT KEPT THE DOOR JAMMED AND THE ELEVATOR STATIONARY WHILE YOU WERE BUSY. YOU PRESS THE BUTTON MARKED "BASEMENT" AND KEEP YOUR FINGER THERE ALL THE WAY DOWN, PREVENTING ANYONE ELSE FROM GETTING ON ...
WHEN THE BASEMENT LEVEL SIGN BLINKS ON THE CAR STOPS AND YOU GET OUT. YOU WALK QUIETLY UNDER BEAMS AND PIPES ON SOFT RUBBER SOLES BOUGHT ESPECIALLY FOR THE OCCASION AND PASS THE SLEEPING FORM OF THE JANITOR HUNCHED OVER A HALF EMPTY BOTTLE OF VODKA. IN THE NEXT FEW MOMENTS YOU'RE THROUGH THE SMALL FIRE EXIT AND OUT IN THE ALLEY WHICH IS EMPTY AS YOU KNEW IT WOULD BE. YOU MOVE RAPIDLY PAST THE AISLES OF TRASH CANS AND LITTER, HEADING STRAIGHT FOR CENTRAL PARK ...

AT 79TH STREET YOU EMERGE INTO SUNLIGHT AND FACE THE PARK. THERE ARE PEOPLE HERE, YOU KNOW, BUT THE CHANCE OF MEETING SOMEONE IS A MINIMAL RISK YOU HAVE TO TAKE. AND NOW YOU ARE ENTERING THE PARK AND BREATHING ALMOST NORMALLY AGAIN...
YOU STAND ALONE BY THE LAKE UNDER THE WARM SUMMER SUN AND WAIT. YOU'RE RELAXED NOW, TRANQUIL EVEN... THE SOUND OF THE FIRE ENGINES WILL COME SOON ENOUGH. YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR A MOMENT AND THINK BACK TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN...
YOUR MARRIAGE WITH MARY WAS A TURMOIL FROM THE BEGINNING, WASN'T IT, JEFF? FROM THE DAY OF YOUR HASTY WEDDING, THROUGH HER LOSING THE CHILD, TO NOW, THE YEARS HAD FADED QUICKLY INTO A MUTUAL HATE... A HATE YOU BOTH RARELY TRIED TO HIDE...
AND THAT EVENING WHEN THE DOOR SWUNG OPEN AND LOUISE TAYLOR AND HER HUSBAND WALKED IN YOU SUDDENLY FELT SOMETHING YOU HADN'T FELT FOR YEARS
LOUISE, BERNIE... IT'S BEEN AGES! YOU LOOK WONDERFUL!
EVENING BERNIE... LOUISE...
I TOLD YOU THREE WEEKS AGO THE TAYLORS WERE COMING OVER TONIGHT! NOW GET UP AND PUT ON A COAT AND TIE—DAMN!... THERE THEY ARE...!
LOUISE SUMMERS... THE GIRL YOU LOVED FROM A DISTANCE THROUGH FOUR YEARS OF COLLEGE... THE GIRL YOU LONGED FOR, DREAMED ABOUT, AND NEVER HAD THE GUTS TO APPROACH. SO LOUISE HAD MARRIED BERNIE TAYLOR, EH?
HELLO, JEFF... STILL THE HANDSOME BASKETBALL CAPTAIN, I SEE...

WAS IT YOUR IMAGINATION OR WAS SHE GAZING AT YOU ALL THROUGH DINNER THE SAME WAY YOU HAD GAZED AT HER YEARS BEFORE ..LONGING ... HUNGRY. WAS THERE SOMETHING IN THAT FINAL LOOK SHE GAVE YOU AT THE DOOR THAT CONVINCED YOU HERE WAS A WOMAN THAT WAS LONELY DESPITE HER MARRIAGE ... HERE WAS A WOMAN THAT WANTED MORE THAN HER MARRIAGE COULD GIVE HER ...
IS THAT WHY YOU FOUND YOURSELF AT HER FRONT DOOR THAT FOLLOWING MONDAY?
WHO IS IT?... JEFF?
HELLO, LOUISE...
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY ...I ...I'M NOT DRESSED ...
I'M HERE ON A BET, LOUISE ... A BET THAT YOU WERE FEELING THE SAME THINGS LAST FRIDAY NIGHT THAT I WAS ... THAT YOU'VE WANTED ME AS LONG AS I'VE WANTED YOU ... IF IT ISN'T TRUE, TELL ME I'M CRAZY AND I'LL LEAVE ...
JEFF...I ...
SHE WAS IN YOUR ARMS THEN, PRESSING HER CURVACIOUS BODY TO YOURS, CRUSHING YOUR LIPS WITH HOT URGENT KISSES ... AND YOU KNEW, JEFF RICHARDS, THAT YOU HADN'T MADE A MISTAKE ...
LOUISE ...
DARLING ...
BUT WITH THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LOVE CAME THE COLD REALITY OF FACT) EVEN IF MARY GRANTED YOU A DIVORCE, AFTER PAYING ALIMONY YOU'D BE TOO BROKE TO MARRY LOUISE. AND WHAT ABOUT BERNIE?
DARLING, WE CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS... YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HOME WORKING ON A TELEVISION SCRIPT. MARY WILL BEGIN TO SUSPECT...
I KNOW...DAMN! THERE MUST BE A WAY...!

THERE WAS A WAY... A PLAN THAT YOU BEGAN SLOWLY AT FIRST SO NO ONE WOULD SUSPECT... ARRANGING IT SO YOU AND MARY SAW MORE AND MORE OF THE TAYLORS. YOU WENT TO MOVIES TOGETHER, BOWLING, PLAYED CARDS, ANYTHING TO GET MARY AND BERNIE TOGETHER, AND WHEN EVER POSSIBLE, TO GET THEM ALONE...
THEN CAREFULLY, CAUTIOUSLY, YOU SENT BERNIE THE FIRST LETTER...
DEAR BERNARD, JUST A NOTE TO LET YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I ENJOYED MYSELF AT THE PICNIC LAST WEEK. THANK YOU. MARY
GREAT PICNIC! WHERE DID JEFF AND LOUISE GO? PROBABLY OFF NECKING IN THE WOODS!
BERNIE! SHAME ON YOU!
THEY WERE PRETTY INNOCENT, THOSE FIRST LETTERS, BUT GRADUALLY THEY BECAME MORE AND MORE INTERESTING. MEANWHILE LOUISE WAS ADDING KINDLING TO THE FIRE WITH HER LETTERS TO MARY...
DEAREST MARY, I KNOW THIS IS INSANE, BUT I FIND MYSELF THINKING ABOUT YOU EVERY DAY... BERNIE
THEN THE FINAL TOUCH; YOU BOUGHT THE STRING OF LOVE BEADS AND SENT THEM TO YOUR OWN ADDRESS WITH THE NOTE FROM "BERNIE" INSIDE...
HERE'S A PACKAGE FOR YOU, MARY...NO RETURN ADDRESS...
REALLY?
WHAT WAS IN THE PACKAGE, DEAR?
WHY,..UH, SOMETHING I ORDERED FROM MACY'S...A NECKLACE, LIKE IT?

JEFF? YES... BERNARD JUST LEFT THE APARTMENT...
BY NOW THEY WERE ITCHING TO GET ALONE TOGETHER. YOU SAVED MARY THE TROUBLE OF THINKING UP AN EXCUSE BY TELLING HER THE T.V. SCRIPT WAS COMPLETED AND YOU WERE TAKING IT IN THE NEXT DAY. IN THE INTERIM YOU TOOK OUT A JOINT LIFE INSURANCE POLICY FOR FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS. THE NEXT MORNING YOU LEFT THE APARTMENT, WALKED TO THE DRUG STORE PHONE BOOTH, AND WAITED FOR LOUISE'S CALL...
YOU SAT DOWN IN THE CAFE NEXT DOOR AND HAD A CUP OF COFFEE, WATCHING THE STREET OUTSIDE INTENSELY. AT LAST HE CAME, HURRYING TOWARD YOUR APARTMENT BEFORE YOU GOT BACK FROM THE STUDIO. A SMILE PLAYED ACROSS YOUR MOUTH. YOU GAVE HIM TEN MINUTES, THEN MADE YOUR MOVE...
YOU WALKED ACROSS THE STREET TO THE LIQUOR STORE, PURCHASED THE BOTTLE OF VODKA AND RETURNED TO THE APARTMENT BUILDING. YOU PRESSED THE BUTTON ON THE ELEVATOR MARKED BASEMENT AND DESCENDED BELOW THE STREET. OLD JAKE THE JANITOR WAS THERE AS USUAL. YOU GAVE HIM THE BOTTLE...
YOU RETURNED TO THE ELEVATOR, CONFIDENT THAT JAKE WOULD BE OUT LIKE A LIGHT IN MINUTES, AND PRESSED THE BUTTON FOR THE 16TH FLOOR. THE CAR SLOWED TO A STOP AND YOU WALKED TO THE FRONT DOOR OF YOUR APARTMENT. WITHIN CAME THE SOUND OF MUFFLED VOICES. YOU SLID THE KEY INTO THE SLOT SLOWLY... AND THREW OPEN THE DOOR! THEY WERE THERE ON THE SOFA AS YOU'D PLANNED...
CLICK!
JEFF!
THANKS AGAIN, MR. RICHARDS!
DON'T MENTION IT, JAKE. CAN'T DRINK IT MYSELF, ULCER YOU KNOW, AND MY FATHER KEEPS SENDING THEM. NO SENSE IN WASTING IT! S'LONG, JAKE...

BUT YOU DIDN'T GIVE THEM TIME TO EXPLAIN, YOU SEIZED THE HEAVY METAL WRENCH, PLACED CAREFULLY BESIDE THE DOOR, AND ADVANCED ON THE TERRIFIED LOVERS. THE COLD WEAPON FELT STRANGELY LIGHT IN YOUR HAND AS YOU RAISED IT ABOVE YOUR HEAD...
A FOOL... YOU? HE MUST BE JOKING. IT WAS MORE THAN OBVIOUS WHO THE FOOLS WERE.
YOU WATCHED BERNIE'S NOSE AND TEETH SPLATTER ACROSS THE ROOM AS YOU BROUGHT THE WRENCH DOWN ON HIS FACE...
OH GOD ...HE'S GOING TO...
JEFF! DON'T BE A FOOL!
BERNIE PITCHED SIDEWAYS, EYES OPEN WIDE IN DISBELIEF, AND FELL TO HIS HANDS AND KNEES. HE LOOKED UP AT YOU AS YOU RAISED THE WEAPON AGAIN, TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING, BUT HIS MOUTH WOULDN'T WORK. YOU SPLIT HIS SKULL...
MARY TRIED TO RUN BUT HER HEEL TWISTED ON THE RUG AND SHE SPRAWLED FORWARD HYSTERICALLY. YOU WOULD NEVER FORGET THE LOOK OF ABSOLUTE TERROR IN HER EYES...

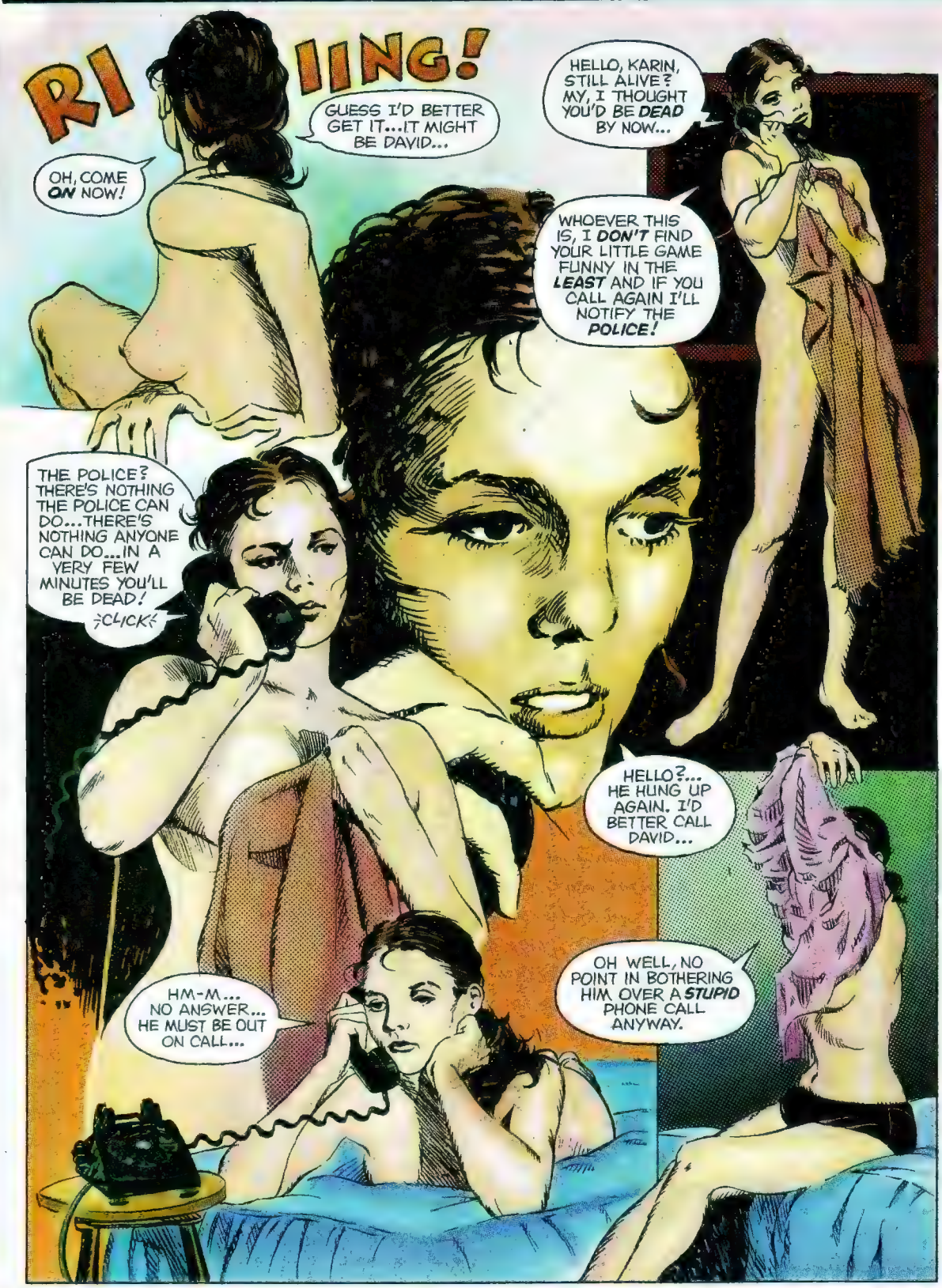
SHE RAISED HER ARMS BUT THE WRENCH KNOCKED HER HANDS AWAY, WRISTS SNAPPING LIKE DRY TWIGS. YOU HIT HER IN THE BACK AND SHE GRUNTED LIKE A PIG, HER FACE SMASHING INTO THE CARPET WITH A STRANGLED CRY ...
SHE ROSE UP ON HER KNEES, TRYING TO SUPPORT HERSELF ON HER MANGLED HANDS, HOLDING THEM OUT TO YOU IN A SIGN OF PITY, BEGGING YOU THROUGH EYES GLAZED WITH FEAR AND PAIN ...
YOU MADE A RED SMEAR OF HER MOUTH WITH THE CLUB, CRUSHING BONE AND CARTILAGE. SHE MOANED BENEATH YOUR HEAVING FIGURE, THEN PUSHED UP AGAIN, SPITTING BLOOD AND BILE, TRYING TO CRAWL AWAY, LEAVING A CRIMSON TRAIL ON THE RUMPLED CARPET ...
YOU FOLLOWED, BRINGING THE WRENCH DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN ON HER SHOULDERS, HER NECK, UNTIL YOUR ARM ACHED AND THE ROOM WAS A RED BLUR AND SHE WASN'T MOANING ANYMORE. THE SCREAM OF THE FIRE ENGINES BRINGS YOU OUT OF YOUR REVERIE. THAT'S IT! YOUR LAST CUE. THE PLAY IS ALMOST ENDED NOW ...

YOU WALK CALMLY WITH MEASURED STEPS...YOU WERE JUST OUT FOR A WALK IN THE PARK... YOU HAD NO IDEA THERE WAS ANYTHING BETWEEN THEM...YOU TURN DOWN 79TH STREET AND SEE THE FIRE ENGINES AND CROWD SURROUNDING THE BUILDING. YOUR EYES TRAVEL UP THE LENGTH OF WINDOWS TO THE 16TH FLOOR...
...AND YOU'RE STILL GAZING THERE TEN MINUTES LATER AFTER THE POLICE PUT THE HAND CUFFS ON YOU AND TRY TO PULL YOU AWAY... GAZING AT THE 16TH FLOOR, THE FLAG POLE JUST BELOW YOUR WINDOW AND THE BATTERED BODIES OF BERNIE AND MARY SWAYING GENTLY FROM THE STRING OF LOVE BEADS...

YOUR NAME IS KARIN PAYNE. YOU'RE A 23-YEAR OLD, TALL ATTRACTIVE BRUNETTE WALKING HOME WITH THE EVENING RUSH... THE SAME WAY YOU'VE WALKED A HUNDRED TIMES BEFORE. ONLY TONIGHT WILL BE DIFFERENT...TONIGHT WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR APARTMENT DOOR YOU WILL ENTER INTO TERROR...A TERROR YOU WILL BE FORCED TO FACE COMPLETELY AND UNAVOIDABLY...
ALONE
RIIING! RIIING!
UH-OH...THE TELEPHONE...
RIIING!
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'M COMING...
BRUCE JONES
Color: DeWalt

Story and Art: Bruce Jones

HELLO, KARIN... ARE YOU READY TO DIE?
:CLICK:
WHAT? WHO IS THIS? HELLO... HELLO?...
PROBABLY SOME CRACKPOTS IDEA OF AN OBSCENE PHONE CALL...BUT HOW DID HE KNOW MY NAME...?
WELL, I'M NOT GOING TO WORRY ABOUT IT NOW...ALL I WANT AT THIS MOMENT IS A NICE HOT BATH...
M-M-M... WORLD, GO AWAY!...
AH-H-H! THIS IS MORE LIKE IT!


RI IING!
GUESS I'D BETTER GET IT...IT MIGHT BE DAVID...
OH, COME ON NOW!
HELLO, KARIN, STILL ALIVE? MY, I THOUGHT YOU'D BE DEAD BY NOW...
WHOEVER THIS IS, I DON'T FIND YOUR LITTLE GAME FUNNY IN THE LEAST AND IF YOU CALL AGAIN I'LL NOTIFY THE POLICE!
THE POLICE? THERE'S NOTHING THE POLICE CAN DO...THERE'S NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO...IN A VERY FEW MINUTES YOU'LL BE DEAD!
:CLICK:
HELLO?... HE HUNG UP AGAIN. I'D BETTER CALL DAVID...
HM-M... NO ANSWER... HE MUST BE OUT ON CALL...
OH WELL, NO POINT IN BOTHERING HIM OVER A STUPID PHONE CALL ANYWAY.

MAYBE IT WAS DAVID PHONING, PLAYING A PRACTICAL JOKE...NO, HE WOULDN'T DO A THING LIKE THAT...
...NOT TWO WEEKS BEFORE HE *MARRIES* ME!
TWO WEEKS...WHY COULDN'T IT BE *NOW*, DARLING? WHY COULDN'T YOU BE HERE BESIDE ME... *HOLDING* ME CLOSE... M-M...
RIING! RIING!
I *WON'T!* I *ABSOLUTELY WON'T* ANSWER IT! I *KNOW* WHO'S ON THE OTHER END OF THAT LINE...

...YES?
STILL THERE, KARIN? WELL JUST BE PATIENT MY DEAR. ANY MOMENT NOW IT'LL ALL BE OVER. WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW HOW, KARIN?
LISTEN YOU...
I'LL TELL YOU HOW... YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF. THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S ALL GOING TO LOOK LIKE SUICIDE!
WHO IS THIS?
A FRIEND, KARIN. A FRIEND YOU MET ONLY ONCE. IT WAS AT A PARTY, REMEMBER? THE GREAT KONAR...?
CLICK
HUNG UP AGAIN! DAMN HIM! PARTY... WHAT PARTY? I HAVEN'T BEEN TO A PARTY IN AGES...
SLAM!

LORD, I'LL NEVER SLEEP NOW...I NEED A CIGARETTE...
WHAT WAS IT HE SAID... "THE GREAT KONAR?" HM-M, KONAR. YES... THAT DOES RING A BELL...
KONAR...KONAR, NOW I REMEMBER! CHERYL BATTER'S PARTY A FEW MONTHS AGO! SHE HAD AN ENTERTAINER THERE ...A HYPNOTIST AND...AND...
...AND IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE THE GREAT KONAR!
THANK YOU, THANK YOU...BEFORE WE BEGIN THE DEMONSTRATION IN HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION, I'LL NEED A VOLUNTEER...
CLAP! CLAP! CLAP! CLAP!
WOULD YOU MIND HELPING US, MISS...?
ME...?
"I WAS EMBARRASSED, BUT CHERYL AND THE OTHERS KEPT INSISTING AND APPLAUDING 'TILL FINALLY I CONSENTED...
"KONAR ASKED ME TO LIE UPON THE SOFA AND RELAX COMPLETELY, THEN HE MADE THE OTHER GUESTS LEAVE THE ROOM WHILE HE PUT ME UNDER...

"WHEN WE WERE ALONE, HE HELD A CANDLE ABOVE MY HEAD AND TOLD ME TO WATCH THE FLAME AND LISTEN ONLY TO HIS VOICE..."
"THAT WAS THE LAST THING I REMEMBER BEFORE KONAR AWAKENED ME...
"CHERYL TOLD ME LATER ABOUT THE ILLUSIONS HE CREATED WHILE I WAS UNDER..."
"I AWAKENED AND REMEMBERED NOTHING. THEN ABOUT AN HOUR LATER..."
MAY I HAVE A CIGARETTE, PLEASE...?
AND NOW FOR AN EXPERIMENT IN POST-HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION...KARIN, IN ONE HOUR I WILL ASK YOU FOR A CIGARETTE. AT THE SOUND OF THAT WORD YOU WILL IMMEDIATELY ASSUME ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHICKEN!
I'M GOING TO AWAKEN YOU NOW...
HA! HA-HA! HA!
HA! HA!
SQWAK! SQWAK!
THANK YOU, KARIN...
"I FELT LIKE A COMPLETE IDIOT..."

I REMEMBER NOW... I HAD AN UNEASY FEELING THROUGH THE ENTIRE PARTY... KONAR KEPT STARING AT ME, WATCHING MY EVERY MOVE. HE MUST BE CRAZ--
STARTING TO REMEMBER NOW, KARIN?...THE PARTY, THE TRICKS? PERHAPS YOU ALSO REMEMBER SOMEONE ELSE. SOMEONE YOU KNEW QUITE WELL... TONY SANDERS...
R-I-I-I-I-ING!
YOU...YOU KNEW TONY?
"REMEMBER THE HEADLINES, KARIN? 'MAN LEAPS TO DEATH FROM APARTMENT BUILDING—APPARENT SUICIDE.' HE LOVED YOU, KARIN..."
I'M HIS BROTHER, KARIN, OR WAS HIS BROTHER UNTIL YOU—
OH, MY GOD!
BUT YOU WALKED OUT ON HIM DIDN'T YOU? MY BROTHER WAS IN MEDICAL SCHOOL...HE WAS GOING TO BE A FINE SURGEON SOME DAY, RESPECTED BY HIS FELLOW MAN. BUT YOU, YOU LITTLE TRAMP...'
PLEASE... YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND...
I UNDERSTAND ALL RIGHT...I'VE SPENT EVERY WAKING HOUR OF THE LAST SIX WEEKS FINDING OUT ALL ABOUT YOU...WHERE YOU LIVE, WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE. I FINALLY FINAGLED MY WAY INTO THAT PARTY. YES, I'VE STUDIED HYPNOSIS FOR YEARS...AND NOW I'M ABOUT TO PULL OFF MY GREATEST ILLUSION...

I PUT YOU IN A DEEP TRANCE WHEN THE OTHERS WERE OUT OF THE ROOM...VERY DEEP! SO DEEP THAT WHEN THE TIME COMES YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO FIGHT THAT OTHER POST HYPNOTIC SUGGESTION!
...OTHER SUGGESTION?
TODAY IS AUG. 12
I TOLD YOU THEN THAT YOU WERE GOING TO EXPERIENCE A VERY FAMILIAR COMMONPLACE OCCURANCE ON AUGUST 12TH...SOMETHING YOU DO EVERY DAY WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT IT. A SIGHT, A SOUND, A TOUCH...
AND WHEN DURING THE COURSE OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE, THAT EXPERIENCE OCCURS ...YOU ARE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF!
SLAM!
NO! NO!
STOP IT! YOU'RE TRYING TO FRIGHTEN ME! THAT'S ALL ...JUST FRIGHTEN ME!
OH GOD... WHAT IF IT'S TRUE? IT COULD BE ANYTHING! THE WALLS...THE FURNITURE...
"...A SIGHT..."

NO! NO! I MUSTN'T LOOK AT ANYTHING!!
"A SOUND...
TIC!
TIC! TIC!
TIC! TIC!
TIC! TIC!
TIC TIC TIC
TIC!
I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS APARTMENT... AWAY FROM THESE FAMILIAR OBJECTS!
CRASH!
"A TOUCH..."
NO! THAT'S WHAT HE WANTS ME TO DO, LEAVE THE APARTMENT... THEN IT WILL HAPPEN...ON THE ELEVATOR...IN THE CAR...

I'VE GOT TO GET A GRIP ON MYSELF... GOT TO THINK THIS OUT WITH A *RATIONAL* MIND!
THERE *HAS* TO BE A WAY TO GET OUT OF HERE WITHOUT ALERTING THE SUGGESTION!
THE *PHONE!* I'VE *ALREADY* USED THAT! IT CAN'T HARM ME! MAYBE DAVID IS BACK NOW...
...YES, OPERATOR, I WANT TO SPEAK TO A MR. DAVID RAMSEY AT EXTENSION 477...
HELLO?...
HELLO? HELLO? IS THAT YOU, KARIN?

YOU WALK TO THE BALCONY, KARIN PAYNE, TAKING YOUR TIME... KNOWING WHAT ***YOU HAVE TO DO.*** YOU ARE CALM NOW, RELAXED. AMAZING HOW AN EVERYDAY THING LIKE THE SOUND OF YOUR FIANCE'S ***VOICE*** COULD RELAX YOU SO... COULD MAKE YOU SEEK THE COMFORT OF THE COOL EVENING AIR... YOU SMILE AS YOU CLIMB UPON THE LEDGE...

THE BREEZE STIRS A LOCK OF GAUZE INTO THE BLACKNESS. HOW ***CLEVER OF KONAR*** TO FIND OUT YOU HAD A ***BALCONY.*** THIS WAS ***HIS IDEA*** OF ***POETIC JUSTICE.*** AND HE WAS ***RIGHT...*** YOU HAVE NO WILL TO RESIST. YOU ***LAUGH,*** THROW YOUR LEGS OVER THE LEDGE... POISE YOURSELF... AND ***PUSH!*** AND YOU ARE GLAD...

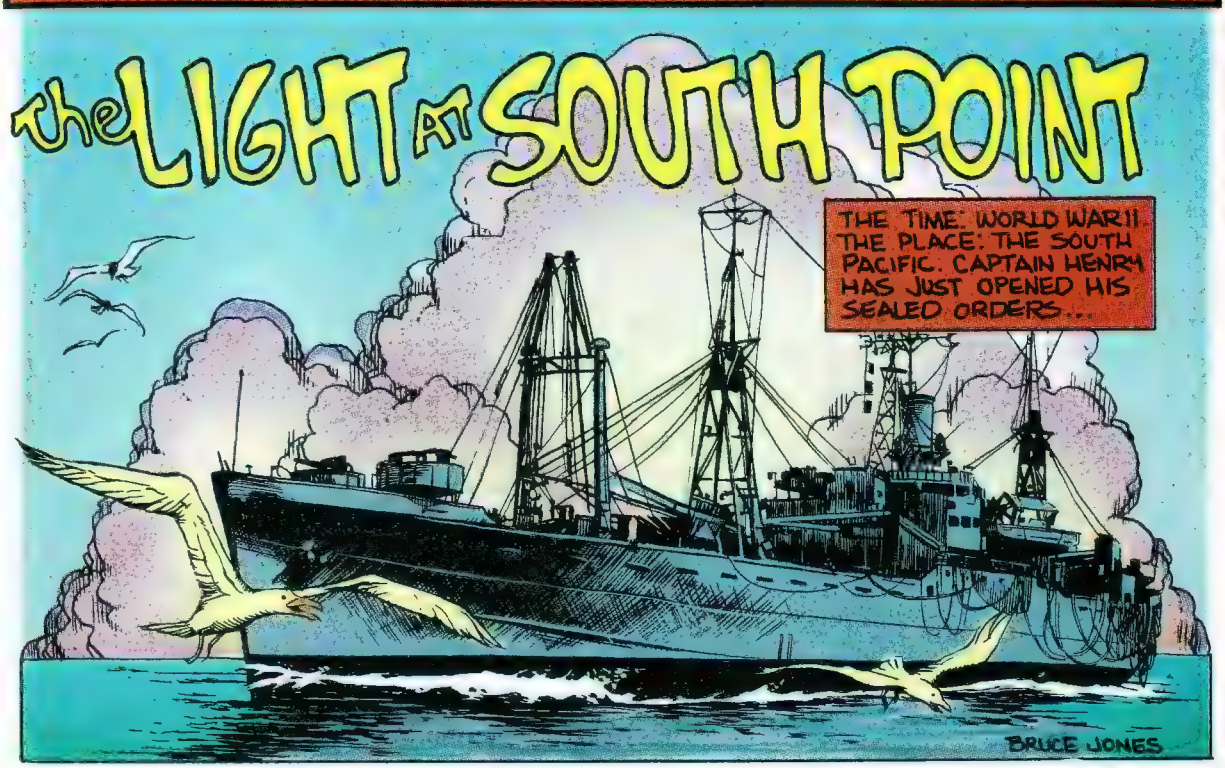
GLAD, AS YOU FALL THROUGH SPACE THAT IT IS ***OVER***-- GLAD A MOMENT LATER WHEN DAVID'S STRONG ARMS HELP YOU FROM THE WET LAWN SURROUNDING THE BUILDING...

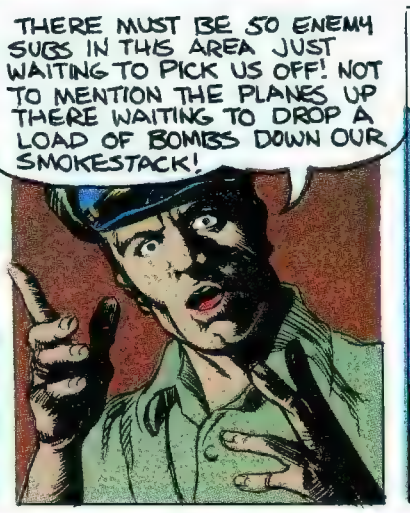
DARLING, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

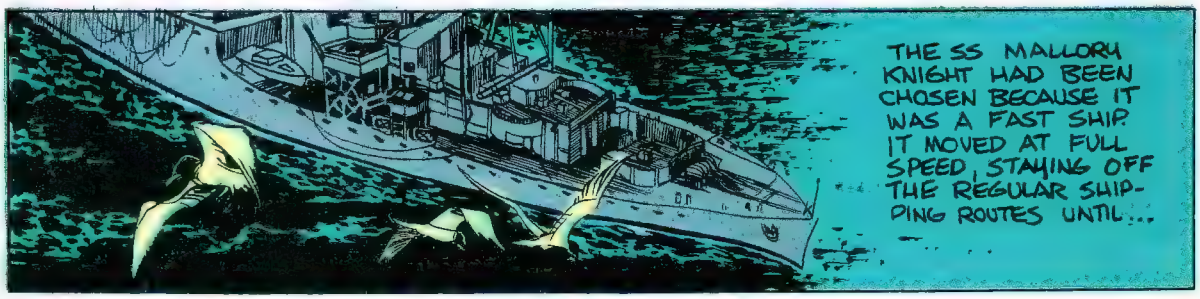
GLAD THAT, FOR ALL HIS CLEVERNESS, KONAR ***FAILED*** TO NOTICE YOU'D ***MOVED*** FROM THE ***NINETEENTH FLOOR*** TO THE ***FIRST...*** THREE DAYS AGO...

THE END

the LIGHT at SOUTH POINT




THERE MUST BE SO ENEMY SUBS IN THIS AREA JUST WAITING TO PICK US OFF! NOT TO MENTION THE PLANES UP THERE WAITING TO DROP A LOAD OF BOMBS DOWN OUR SMOKESTACK!


THE SS MALLORY KNIGHT HAD BEEN CHOSEN BECAUSE IT WAS A FAST SHIP. IT MOVED AT FULL SPEED, STAYING OFF THE REGULAR SHIPPING ROUTES UNTIL...

Story and Art: Bruce Jones Colors: Mike Worley

CAPTAIN, WE CAN'T FIND THE CHARTS FOR THE AREA OFF SOUTH POINT. THEY'RE MISSING!
THAT'S THE GUIMARA STRAITS! NO ONE CAN SAIL THROUGH THOSE AT NIGHT WITHOUT CHARTS. WE'RE SURE TO CRASH AGAINST THE BARRIER REEFS!
STOP ENGINES. MAINTAIN RADIO SILENCE. DOUSE ALL LIGHTS. WE'LL WAIT UNTIL DAWN AND TAKE OUR CHANCES...
MAN, I HOPE THERE ARE NO SUBS IN THIS AREA. TALK ABOUT SITTING DUCKS...
YEAH, I BET WE MAKE A PRETTY PICTURE ON A RADAR SCREEN. HEY, WHAT'S THAT?
LOOK! THAT LIGHT ON THE HORIZON! IT'S BLINKING MORSE CODE! GET THE CAPTAIN!
I'M GETTING IT CAPTAIN. IT'S THE REGENT PANTHER, AN ENGLISH SHIP OUT OF LIVERPOOL. WILL... PROVIDE... CO-ORDINATES.. FOR. PASSAGE ..THROUGH STRAITS...
THANK GOD! LET'S GET THOSE ENGINES STARTED!

THE SS MALLORY KNIGHT MADE IT SAFELY THROUGH THE GUIMARA STRAITS AND DELIVERED ITS CARGO. MONTHS LATER, CAPTAIN HENRY WAS IN NEW YORK HAVING DINNER WITH SEVERAL OTHER CAPTAINS. ONE OF THEM WAS ENGLISH. THE CAPTAIN TOLD THEM THE STORY...

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO MEET THE CAPTAIN OF THE REGENT PANTHER AND THANK HIM PERSONALLY...
WHEN DID YOU SAY THAT HAPPENED, OLD CHAP?

LAST FALL, JUST BEFORE WE SAILED BACK TO SAN FRANCISCO. WHY DO YOU ASK?

PERHAPS YOU GOT THE NAME WRONG. LAST FALL WAS 1943 AND I HAPPEN TO KNOW THAT THE REGENT PANTHER SANK IN THE GUIMARA STRAITS TWENTY YEARS AGO.

YOU SEE, MY FATHER WAS THE SKIPPER, AND HE WENT DOWN WITH ALL HANDS!

VAMPIRES OF LESBOS

Story and Art: Bruce Jones Colors: Teresa Bieri

PRINCESS
NEJAH
OF
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